



*Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*  
*627 East 187<sup>th</sup> Street*  
*Bronx, New York 10458*  
*718.295.3770*

January 28, 2018

New York City is a desired destination for people around the world. It is the home of some of the most intelligent, talented human beings in fields as diverse as finance, media, and the arts. You have heard it said--and I think it's true--if you can make it in New York City, you can make it anywhere.

Our city also has its share of challenges. There are people without work. We have crime. We have homelessness. Some of our homeless brothers and sisters are in shelters and others are on the street. Many of those on the street are suffering addiction or mental illness.

Our great neighborhood is not exempt from these challenges. Our parish is called to welcome and serve everyone, especially those who are most in need of God's love and our care. When I walk into our offices and see families or individuals being loved and serviced by our religious sisters or office staff with clothes and food, I am edified. When we are able to refer someone to addiction programs or other services, as we do often, I am edified. We will continue to look for more and better ways to serve these beautiful children of God.

This said, our church building is not a shelter. It is not a good place for the homeless to sleep or eat. It is not a place for anyone to disrupt people who are trying to pray in silence or in the Liturgy.

I would like to ask for your help in maintaining a quiet and safe environment in the church. If you see someone causing a disruption, first pray for the person in question, then inform a staff member in the church (priests, sisters, sacristan, or maintenance personnel). If there is no staff member in the church, please step outside the church and use your cell phone to call the parish office (718-295-3770). We will immediately send a member of our team to take care of the situation. If you believe the situation is dangerous to yourself or others, don't hesitate to call 911.

With the goal of maintaining a quiet and safe environment in the church, we are looking for volunteers, simply to be present in the church, when staff members are elsewhere. On weekdays, we need people especially between 1:00pm and 3:00pm and 5:00pm - 6:00pm. On the weekends, we need people on Sunday afternoons from 3:00pm - 6:00pm. Many churches in our City are closed outside of mass times. I don't want to do this. If you are able to help, please contact the parish office.

Let's keep in mind that if we have a perfectly safe and quiet church, but we are not loving and caring for the needy, we are failing as disciples of Christ. I'm inspired by so many of you who act with kindness and charity to the people in our neighborhood in desperate situations. When I see you greet them, help them, I know too you are praying for them.

God bless,  
Fr. Jonathan